

G O D S
 PROVIDENCE,
 A
 S E R M O N

Preached before the Honourable
 House of COMMONS,

At their late solemn Fast, *Decemb. 28. Anno 1642.*
 in St. *Margaret's* Church at *Westminster*.

By ED. CORBETT, *Fellow of MERTON*
Colledge in Oxford.

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TO THE HONORABLE
HOUSE OF
COMMONS,
Now Assembled in
PARLIAMENT.

THe same reason which first moved me to undertake this work, makes me now such as it is to publish it, Obedience to this Honorable House: which did then answer those discouraging arguments of my great imperfections, the want of my study, my little acquaintance in practicall Divinity, And doth still excuse me in any thing else but Sin. For I have taught my eyes to read much Divinity in Mans command, I can deny my self to serve my Superiours; Indeed the voice of God makes me deaf to Humane Institutions: And when Heaven speaks, I do not understand the language of the world: Disobedience in such a case is Devotion, and the greatest Rebellion, the best Christian. If no other motive could subvert my thoughts to this beleeve, St. Paul is plain and positive in my Text, shewing the vanity and deceitfulness of all the Creatures excellency: the power, weaknesse; the riches, poverty; the wisdom, folly: That God alone is power, and riches, and wisdom,

The Epistle Dedicatory.

wisdom, and all things. And surely this argument deserves the severest study, the most holy Meditations of every childe of Adam, and therefore cannot be unwelcome to a great Councell of wise Senators, who have received a large measure, a full cup of Divine Providence, and in sight of Hell continues successfull. In which Discourse I proceed as much as my memory would give leave by example, and matter of fact, which brings the Conclusion to our bosomes, and is more prevalent than speculation. The unskilfulnesse of the pen I hope will not take off from the power of the Subject, the rude clothing cannot more offend the eye than the precious body may affect the heart. In which assurance I remain

Your unworthy servant,

EDW. CORBETT.



Gods Providence.

A Sermon preached at the late Fast, before the
Honourable House of COMMONS.

1 COR. I. 27.

— God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. —



AND we no other light but that of Nature, and no other writings but the book of the world, we might read a God, and see his Providence: But to finde a Saviour, to know a Gospel, to understand the mysteries of Salvation, is above the Art of humane learning, the Spirit of God must be our Tutor therein, and the holy Scriptures onely can teach and give us such a lesson: For God hath hid those secrets from the Scribes and great Philosophers of the earth, he hath cast away the understanding of the Prudent, as the Apostle speaks. And hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise.

Matth. 16 17.

Ioh. 3 4.

1 Cor. 2. 10.

Ioh. 1. 39.

Matth. 11. 25.

1 Cor. 1. 19.

My text is of that Nature as will not easily admit a Division. I shall therefore insist upon three Propositions, which I conceive do naturally arise, and which I hope will give the full sense and scope of the words.

First Εἰρηνησμός, hath chosen: Imports Gods eternall choice, the Councell of his will, his Providence by which he rules and governs all things, and therefore thence I shall take this for my first Proposition.

Prop. 1. Gods will hath an essentiall Influence upon all the Creatures.

Secondly, Μωγή το νοῦς, the foolishnesse of the world: that which in the judgement of worldly men is vain and foolish, by
Gods

Gods Providence.

Gods power is of great value and vertue: whence I raise this second Proposition.

Prop. 2. *Foolish things in the judgement of the world, are in great esteeme with our wise God.*

Thirdly, *Karazem*, to confound or make ashamed: That which is weak, and foolish, and nothing regarded by carnall eyes, confounds many times the greatest power and wisdom; and by the hand of Providence brings ruine and shame upon that which worldly men most glory and confide in: whence I shall infer my third Proposition.

Prop. 3. *God can effect great and glorious designs by weak and improbable means.*

Every Proposition would afford abundant matter for a distinct Sermon. I can therefore onely point at some generall heads, and as it were give you a little map of this great Countrey, taking my Propositions in that order which I have mentioned.

1. *Gods will hath an effectual Influence upon all the Creatures.*

The Nature and Condition of Gods will, with those distinctions and difficulties disputed amongst the school-men, and betwixt the *Arminians* and *Contra-Arminians*, are either too high for humane understanding to reach, or else are piously resolved by learned pens already. I shall only touch upon the power and providence thereof, so far as may conduce to the quieting of our thoughts in these distracted times, and to give us patience & comfort in the middelt of all afflictions. And to this purpose *David* assures us, that our God is in heaven, he doth whatsoever he will; and *S. Paul*, that God worketh all things according to the counsell of his own will: And *Iustin Martyr*, with *Saint Aug.* that Gods will is the cause of all things. What confusion cannot he order? what wisdom cannot he frustrate? what weaknesse cannot he enable? Nothing so high that is above his command, nothing so low that is beneath his Providence. If the Potter have power of the same lump to make one vessell to honour, and another to dishonour, and to preserve or break in pieces what he hath made, when

Psal. 115. 10.

*Ephes. 1. 11.
Tract. de Ever
Arist. dogma-
tuan L. 4. de
Gene. c. 12. &
in Enche 96
Rom 9. 21.
1er. 18 4*

when as the vessell depends upon the earth of which it consists, of the water by which it was tempered, of the wheele which fashioned it, and of the fire which baked and hardened all: How much more shall the God Almighty who giveth to every creature matter and form, vertue & activity and beantie, exercise his will upon them? How much more shall he build up, and pull down, save and destroy, and dispose them as seemeth good unto him? *Nebuchadnezzar* (one of the greatest and proudest Kings that ever was) will confesse as much. *Dan. 4. 32.* according to his will he worketh in the Army of heaven, and in the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what dost thou? the Armies of heaven do acknowledge God in all their wayes, Legions of Angels who excell in strength, who are as full of power as of glory, & know no Law but their makers pleasure: The inhabitants of the earth, Men and Divels, whatsoever the Sun hath looked upon, or the creation hath raised from nothing, have this necessity upon them, to obey the Almightyes will, and while they rush against his Counsell, do fulfill it, which may appeare more distinctly, by considering three particulars.

*Miro & inf
fabili modo non
fieri poterit
ius voluntatis,
quod contra
ius voluntatis
est.*

I. Every Creature depends on God.

Every creature is the effect of God *secundum esse*, essentially depends upon him, or as *Scotus* speaks, is dependance it self: of necessity then they stand in need of Gods perpetuall help, the hand which made must support, and the power which raised from nothing must still preserve from nothing. Which Christ confirms, *John. 5. 17.* *My Father worketh hitherto and I work;* and Saint Paul, *Heb. 1. 3.* *He beareth up all things with his mightie word:* He beareth up all things, 1. *Sustinendo* as a pillar and sure foundation upon which they stand. 2. *Influendo* as a fountaine from which they derive all their vertue and operations. 3. *Constringendo* as a soveraign bond by which the parts of all things hold together, & are preserved as water in a vessel from dissolution and running into nothing, and he beareth up all things without any labour or difficulty τὸ εὐμαρ, only by his pleasure, his will by the same word, and breath, by which they were first made. The creature cannot stand one moment without Gods actuall supportance; All things would run into confusion without his powerfull

In. 19. 2.

*Gr. g. l. 2. or.
c. 12. Hiero.
cont. Pelagius.
Orig. li. 1.
nisi ap.*

Phil. 33. 6.

Centaren de
perfl. 2. c. 5.
Aqui as.
Con. Gen. 1. 3.
c. 24.
Thom p. 1. q.
104. Sua in
Mett. Vasquez
in 1 p. d 72.
Scotus in 2. d.
q 5.
Hieron in Ep.
ad Ctesiphon-
tem & in 1. 1.
Contra Pela-
gianos.
Aet 17. 25.

Ioh. 2. 13.

Aet 17. 28.
Matth. 14. 29.
Dan. 3. 27.
Exod. 14. 21.
Numb. 20. 8.
Ios. 10. 13.
In 1. ad Heb.
Rom. 2. ad
Heb.

2 Sam. 15. 36.

full influence who created all things. For the frame of the world, is not like a House which will stand it self after the Carpenter hath raised it, but receives continuall subsistence from the Author, must be preserved in being & working, or else will suddenly break and fall in peeces: It depends upon the Almighty as the figure of a Seal imprinted upon the water, which being withdrawn, the Impression is instantly defaced; or as the light in the aire which upon the Suns removall is presently extinct. Upon which grounds the Schol-men affirm, that preservation is a continued creation, that every thing is as it were newly born, newly produced; And although in themselves permanent, yet in respect of God are *quasi in fieri*: they are as it were under the hammer, they are in a perpetuall forge and dependance.

And as our Nature, so are our actions; we cannot utter one word, think one thought, turn our Eye, or move a finger, without the concurrence of his power who giveth life and breath, and all things; much lesse can we of our selves performe any thing which is good, direct a wish, or tread one step towards heaven. As the Ax is in the hand of him that heweth, without whose elevation it neither cuts nor sinks into the timber; so are we all in the hand of that Master builder of Heaven and earth, we are dead and uselesse tools without his Influence, who giveth as well the will as the work, and in whom we live, and move, and have our being. Heavy bodies cannot sinke in the water, nor the fire burn that which is most combustible, if the God of *Israel* speak the word; the watry Ocean becomes a dry pavement, and the hard rock a springing well at the pleasure of the Almighty: the Sun of Heaven refreshed as a Giant to run his course, must stand still until the God of heaven concur to the motion: the consideration whereof made Saint *Ambrose* break out into this language, *Non minus est conservare mundum quam creare*, it is as great a work to preserve the world as to create it: and Saint *Chrysost.* *domus mundi* it is a greater work: As it is more labour and strength to support a burden long in the air, then at first to raise it from the earth, which may teach us:

To deny our selves, to yeeld up and resigne our souls unto Gods disposing Providence: every one professing with *David*, here am I, let the Lord deal with me as seemeth good unto him.

For

For Dependency is very humble and respectiue, it studies contentment and care to comply, it commands the soul a holy silence, and in all afflictions keeps under the least rising of our hearts against the Almighty: It makes us kisse the rod, and with the Christians in *Tertullian*, thank our Executioners. For shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? Is it his great mercy that we do not fall into nothing, or which is worse, into eternall flames? and shall the calamities of this world which crosse perchance our hopes, and so prevent our pride, or draw from us some gilded earth, which haply wou'd have made us more wicked, or at most destroy these houses of clay which of themselves will fall in sunder? shall (I say) a temporall bodily chastisement, the scourges of a loving Father drive us to impatiency, or distrust, or make us curse the day of our nativity? *Ioh 3.* A Souldier is tried in a conflict, and a Mariner shews his skill in a tempest. And shall a Christian faint or fear in the Seas of Adversitie, in the battels of affliction? We see, the candle shines brightest when the air is dark; and the fire burns hottest when the weather is cold. Nature teaching these inanimate creatures to rejoyce as it were in danger, and to triumph over oppression: It is empty chaff which is tost up and down with the winde, not sound corn; and they are rotten trees which a storm overthrowes. Let us consider, that smooth and golden steps lead for the most part unto lust and carnall securitie, they make us insensible of Gods mercies, and lesse regardfull of his judgements, and more conceited of our own greatnesse: let us consider that the wayes of the wicked prosper, they gallop over the green plains of pleasure and plentie, their houses are peaceable, and the rod of God is not upon them. And shall we envy the condition of wicked men? shall we complain because our Kingdom is not of this world? shall we be angry with our blessings? Indeed when we consider the grievance it self, we may look after a change of our Condition, for we carry about us flesh and blood, and who can say his heart is clear? But yet we must remember the Author of our afflictions, the hand which strikes, and the Providence which directs them: we may with our Saviour desire the Cup to passe from us, but we must with our Saviour also desire not our own wills, but Gods be done: Murmuring may enrage our Crosse, and

*Ioh 2. 10.
Damnati gratias agant, ac-
cusatio votum,
& poena felicitas.*

Heb 12 6.

Ioh 3.

*Ier. 13. 1. 2.
Conseruisse
Dios, quos pro
sceleris ultio
velint, his se-
cundiores res
& diuturnio-
rem sanitatem
conceder.*

*Czsl. de bel.
Gall.
Iob 21. 7.
Marth 26. 9.
42.
Ics. 45. 9.*

make them more heavie, but cannot remove them, it may encrease our guilt, and bring upon us new judgements; it cannot take them off, like a bird that is entangled in the lime twigs, the more she struggles, the more she doubles her danger.

2. *God is All-knowing and Omnipresent with the Creatures.*

What power of Man or Angel can cloud the Eyes of the Almighty? what darknesse hideth from his face with whom the night shineth as the day; the darknesse and light are both alike. A heathen will tell thee God is neer thee, he is with thee, he is within thee; a father will tell thee, God is never from thee; the Schoolmen will tell thee, God is more present with thee then thou art with thy self, and give good reasons for what they say: And above all St. *Paul* will tell thee, *Hebr. 4. 13.* all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him, with whom we have to do: Nothing can escape his knowledge, we are as it were divided and bowelled, without our clothes, without our skin, in the sight of God. But when we are lockt in our chambers, the windows shut, the curtains drawn over our heads, when we are compassed about with stone wals, who then shall see us? *Nemo te videt* (saith St. *Bernard*) *non, tamen nulum*: No man indeed can see thee, but he seeth thee before whose tribunall thou must one day stand, and give an account for every idle word. Thy good Angels see thee, and grieve at thy sin; the Divil seeth thee, and rejoyceth at thy follie. The stones in the wall see thee, and are ready when God pleaseth to fall upon thee, and to grinde thee to powder. But Gods power doth not rest here, his all-seeing Eye is not terminated in words and actions. He searcheth the rains, he reads cleerly the book of our soul, he hears our thoughts. This house of our body, wals of flesh cannot exclude the rayes of that Omnipotent Majestie, *David* in *Psal. 94. v. 8.* will call them fools, who think otherwise; and he will give a reason for it in the 9. v. He that planted the ear shall not he hear? or he that formed the eye shall not he see? he that made the heart, shall not he know the wayes and works thereof? But Gods eyes are purer yet, and I have not expressed the least part of their brightnesse: God understands our thoughts afar off, *Psal. 139. 2.* from all eternitie, saith *Lyrans* upon that place, as soon as he had existence himself, and he

Psal. 139. 12.

Sen. Ep 41.

Hil. i. 8. de pri-

Chrys. in loc.

Psal. 7. 2.

Ier. 11. 20.

Psal. 94. 11.

he was never without exillence, he did know all the purposes, the secret motions, the deepest root and ground of all our cogitations. But alas, who can measure that which is infinite? Our great God knoweth more yet, and which may make us adore, and admire, and tremble, beholds us in our proper and corrupt condition, he discerns much filth, and great stains in the fairest soul, he seeth our carnall thoughts, our worldly thoughts, our presumptuous thoughts, our suspicious thoughts, our partiall thoughts, our curious thoughts, our vain thoughts, he seeth our wisest thoughts are foolishnesse, and our best thoughts have enough to condemne us. But O worme that I am, ashes, and nothing, and worse then nothing; why do I endeavour to fathome the depth of Gods knowledge, to describe that light which looketh further and further, and hath no end of looking further? Whatsoever God seeth (and he seeth whatsoever hath been, and whatsoever is, whatsoever will be, or may be, he seeth whatsoever is to be seen, and whatsoever is not to be seen) he rules, and governs, and commands; he directs to his own glory, and mans salvation. Philosophy will teach us that Angels can discover bad thoughts, by wicked actions, and judge of the soul by the temper of the body: But to see us from everlasting, and to see us in our native foulnesse and deformity, to know our thoughts before they were, and so long before they were to dispose of them to his own ends, this is that *altitudo* of which St. *Paul* speaks, into which the further we descend, the lower we may sink; and the more we know, the more we are ignorant.

Gen. 6. 5.
Isa. 64. 6.

Prov. 16. 4.
Psal. 34. 10.
1 Tim. 2. 4.

O thou Christian then whosoever thou art, having fought a good fight, made conscience of thy wayes, and kept thy self straight in the midst of a crooked generation, do not hang down thy head, or remit one jot of thy zeal in goodnesse for the reproaches of Men; or the unjust censures of all the world, rather revive and quicken thy indutry in every good cause, inflame thy holy life, and in despite of all the sharp arrows of calumnation, run joyfully in the race of Gods service, raise thy languishing thoughts with *David* in the consideration of thy own sinceritie, and innocencie, and tingle hearts: comfort thy self with the example of Christ, who despised the shame for the joy which was set before him; and satisfie thy soul with *Jabs* resolution, behold

Heb. 12. 2.
Job 16. 19.

now my witnesse is in Heaven, and my record is on high. When thou art going to any lewd & profane company, vain pleasure, remember the God of *Israel* looks upon thee: If profit unhappily move thee to injustice, oppression, or any other service of the devell, if rotten luits, unconitant honour, base ends, lay siege unto thy soul, and endanger thy spirituall safety, call to minde the presence of the Almighty. This one weapon of Divine Armory is powerfull enough to confound a whole world of temptations, and to conquer Hell it self. For will any man cut a purse before the Judges face, and when he is sitting upon the Bench? will any man commit adultery in the open streets? Nothing hinders vice so much as nakednesse: and if *Seneca* speak true, the greatest part of sins are committed for want of witnesses. How tender were the primitive Christians herein? who would not tell a lye to save their lives, as *Justin Martyr* relates. *St. Augustine* proceeds further, and will not admit a lye for the salvation of a mans soul. But *Job* hath a strain above all, and will not have a lye told for the glory of God: that glory which is the greatell good, which is the end of all things, which *Moses* prefer'd before his own everlastinge happinesse. O mercifull Father, how are we degenerated from those pious resolutions! what spirit hardens our hearts? and devoures the conscience of these later generations, which make lying a Profession, and are constant in nothing else? which maintain the lawfulness thereof, and confirm untruths with oathes and imprecations. In *Dauids* time the fool said in his heart there is no God, he durst not speak it with his tongue: But our Atheisme is raised to that height and boldnesse, that we dare professe it in our words and actions, we dare brag of our uncleannesse in contempt as it were of heaven, and in scorn of the Almighty. Adde to this the filthinesse of sin, which our Saviour tels us, *Matth. 15.* defiles the Man, *verus* makes him Common, which, by an Hebraisme, is profane, unclear, beastly. Agreeable to which is that of *St. James*, Lay aside all filthinesse, and superfluity of naughtinesse: filthinesse in the abstract, *verus* naughtinesse which is an excrement, a nastie thing, as odious and detestable in the nostrils of the Almighty, as our very excrements are to us. Upon which ground, devout *Anselme* professed that he would rather be in Hell and free from sin, then polluted with the filthinesse

Ap. 2 pro Chr.
p 17.
De mend. ad
Cor. 1. 1. c. 6.
Job 13. 7. 19.
Prov. 1. 6. 4.
Ezad 32 32.

Psal. 14. 7.
Iako dixit in
corde suo quia
hoc nemo audet
dicere & jam si
audet cogitare.
Aug. v. 18.
C. 1. v. 21.

In vita Ansel.

ness thereof possesse the Kingdom of Heaven. Now if every sin be of this blotting beattly condition, if the Almighty beholds them in their vilest shape, in their greatest deformitie, what shall we think of those crying sins, or unfaithfulnesse, blasphemy, whoredom, murther, how do they defile us? what beasts and black Devils do they make us? What shall we think of this great and famous City, lately the Governernesse of Truth, and Crown of true Religion, but now the sink and Common-sore of all Heresies? My Author is in Print, and passeth without contradiction, and in a language which forrain Nations may understand: And thus he further speaks as near as I can translate him. *I dare be bold to say, that more Sects are risen in London in a year and half past, then in the whole Christian world since the Apostles times in 1600 years: Irenaeus reckons up about 20 diverse Sects of Hereticks. Tertullian 27. Theodores 76. Epiphani. 80. August. 88. Damas. 100. Philast. 128. All which being dead and buried many centuries of years since, are raised at this time, and recalled from Hell by Handicraftsmen, and the baser sort of people, not without the great evil of the Londoners; Neither is there yet an end of multiplying Religions. I must confesse I stand amazed at the relation. And know not whether I should be angry with the book, or sorry for the Author, with to the one lesse bitterness, or to the other more charity.*

*Modo veritas
antiquissima &
vera Religio
corona iam sen-
tina & consu-
get omnium be-
refum.
Nuntius Po-
pheticus p. 37.*

3. God governs all things to their ends.

Gods Providence is as generall as his Creation, governing all things by the same infinite power by which they were made. This glorious fabrick of the world would soon lose its beautie, and the great family and rich furniture thereof fall into confusion, if the hand of Providence did not guide their motions, and by a sweet command conduct them to their ends. The waters *Nehem. 9. 6.* would overflow the earth, the fire would ascend above its proper sphear, Lyons and beasts of strength and cruelty would quickly devour the generations of Men: Nay the creatures have destruction enough within themselves, & for want of enemies abroad would become their own Executioners. Divines and Naturalists have spoken so much of the parts of man, their use, and order of the actions, and fabrick of rationall creatures, of the verue of plants, and stones, that wonder is fitter herein than words, and, he doth best relate that story who most admires it; I shall there-
fore

Iob 38. 11.

Deusu parti-
um, 1^o c. 17.

R m 11. 33.

Matt. 6. 28. 29.

& 10. 29 30.

Vid. Aug. 1. 5.

de Civ. Dei. c.

11. & 1. o. c.

14.

Pro. 16. 33.

Lam. 3. 37.

Deut. 19. 4.

2 Sam. 17.

1 S. m 2. 25.

Prov. 21. 1.

fore onely tell you, that *Galen* by the light of Nature did extoll the wisdom of God in the making of a Gnat, in the very *thigh* of a Gnat, that which we do so little regard, which we do so much scorn, which many of us never took notice of, the thigh one of the least and lowest parts of a Gnat, a poore, vile, imperfect creature, yet confesseth the hand of God, and magnifieth that Name which Christians many times blasphemie: the basest worme which creepeth in the dust hath matter enough to silence the wisest Man; and by how much the lesser any creature is, by so much it raiseth the greater wonder. As a small Watch requires a curious hand, and Pictures of the least volume shew mozt of all the Limners skill. Let us consider the whole species of mankind, every childe of *Adam* from the Creation to the last Judgement, and when we have considered let us be astonished, and cry out with *St. Paul*, How unsearchable are his Judgements who gives to so many millions of millions a distinct Face? by which the Husband knows his wife, the father his childe, the Creditor his Debtor, the Magistrate the Delinquent, the Subject his Prince, by which we know our Friends from our Enemies: and without which, Treason, Incest, Parricide, every wickednesse would fill the world, and confusion overwhelm all Government; there is not a Lillie grows in the field, not a drop sinks from the Clouds, not a hair falls from our head, or a sparrow lights on the ground without the Eye of Providence; every grasse hath measure, and the sands of the Sea are numbred; the whole disposing of a Lot is of the Lord. He guideth the stroke of every sword in a battell, and not a bullet flies to any other place then he hath appointed.

Those things which be most free and absolute, the hearts and wills of men follow the Influence of Divine Providence, they do whatsoever liketh them; but yet they can do no more, and in no other manner than God hath decreed, He guideth them to his own Ends, yet guideth according to that Nature he hath put in to them, they voluntarily perform, what certainly shall come to passe. He causeth good actions, he permitteth bad actions, he rules and orders all. *Abolan* shall refuse the good counsell of *Achitophel* if God have so determined; and *Elie's* sons shall not obey the voice of their Father, if the Lord resolve to slay them. The heart of the King is in the hand of God as the Rivers of water, the

Kings

Kings heart, who hath all things at command, and is of all men most free, and whose wrath is as the roaring of a Lion, his heart, his will, his favours, his frowns, his power, his purposes, are ruled by Gods Providence, as the waters are carried in their channels at the pleasure of those who have skill to derive them. *Posidonius* in the life of *St. Augustine*, gives us two memorable examples to this purpose. The good Father being to visit and instruct the people of a certain place, and having a guide to direct the way, and conduct him thither, did notwithstanding mistake the Common and usuall road, and ignorantly fall into a by-path, and so escaped the bloody hands of some Donatists, who knowing of his journey lay in ambush to take away his life: At another time this holy Bishop preaching to the Congregation, and forgetting the Argument, which first he proposed, fell upon the Errors of the Manichees, which he never intended, and by that means converted one *Firmus* his auditor, who afterwards fell down at *St. Augustines* feet, weeping and confessing that he had lived a Manichee many years, and now, by Gods mercy and his last Sermon was reduced to the Catholick beleef. We all know that *Augustus* made the generall tax to enrich his own coffers, but God used it as a means to fulfill the Prophesie of Christs birth at *Bethlehem*. Nay God is the cause why things are not, why a wise Councell of State-Physicians cannot cure the wounds of a bleeding Kingdom, why a peace desired betwixt two contrary Armies finds no successe, why the Enemies which were round about the people of Israel could not desire their Land, the men being absent thrice every yeer, and none but women to oppose, them. It is God who hinders and gives way to every work, nothing is independant on him who depends on nothing.

Indeed *Tick-Brash*, and *Kepler* two famous Mathematicians, seem to Crosse this doctrine, attributing much to the Influences of the Stars, and to that great conjunction of *Saturn* and *Jupiter*. From whose pens some in these times give out many ominous conjectures: and in truth few can be ignorant that the heavenly bodies have great power over inferiour Creatures, and are the partiaall causes of many alterations here belowe; but such crosse accidents do frequently happen in the Matter on which they work, especially in the body & actions of men which are swayd by

Prov. 9. 12.

C. 11.

C. 15.

Vid. de Alpio.

l. 6. conf. ff.

August. c. 7 &

de iul. Cæf.

arud. Suet. in

Cæf. c. 81.

Exod. 34. 34.

Ier. 10. 1.

Rom. 8. 28.

Joel 2. 31.

Matt. 24. 29.

C. 18.

M. Mead in his

Clavis Apo.

Alft. in his

*Diatr.**Carolus Gallus*in his *Clavis**Proph.*

Napier Fon.

Brigh. Contra.

Man.

Mar. 24. 14.

Hurnius de

leg. Evang. ad

Indo.

by reason, and education, and Religion. And God doth so controll and check them at his pleasure, that our sins are more to be feared then the stars, and nothing certain can be concluded from their aspects, but that they work together for the best to them that love the Lord. They make somewhat to fore-tell Mans inclination, and are signes of spirituall events, but they bring no fatal necessity with them, and things contingent are as far above their power, as they are belowe the Almighty's. If we can beleve that the thousand yeers mentioned in the *Revel.* for the binding up of Satan, is yet to come, as divers do strongly perswade us, we need not cast the great fury and confusion of all the world upon the Stars; we need not wonder at those Civill dissensions by which we devour our selves; and when no other enemy could do us any harm, we labour our own destruction. For the old Serpent is such an enemy to goodnesse, and is now so madly furious because his time is short, that he brings forth all his wicked instruments which are in the foure quarters of the world to compassse the Tents of Saints about, and the beloved City, to strike Religion from the heart, and to banish, if it were possible, the Church of Christ from off the earth; and yet thanks be to our gracious God, his power is limited both in regard of time, and measure, and manner; he can go but to the end of his chain, witnesse *Jobs* afflictions; He may expresse his malice, he cannot effect his will: For wickednesse it self is under subjection, and all the strength the devil hath rests in God; I am confident that these raging waters, which do so overflow the banks of Christendome, are trials of the Godly, punishments of sin, and instruments of Divine Providence. I do not more beleve that the Sun is in the Heaven, or that I am speaking to this Congregation, then I do beleve that all the calamities which are fallen upon this Land, shall turn to the benefit of Gods people, that Antichrist shall concur to his own subversion, and the very enemies of Truth shall advance it; when that scarlet whore, who hath so long made the Nations drunk with her fornications shall fall; and it is most probable that her ruin is near at hand: when a more full and entire calling of the Gentiles then hitherto hath been, shall be accomplished, and their reasons are prevailing with me, who yet expect such a calling: when the Jewish Nation shall be fully reduced to
 Chri-

Christian Religion, and it is a granted truth amongst the best Divines, that such a conversion is yet to come, then shall the Church of Christ break through the clouds of affliction, prevail over Antichrist, and all the instruments of hell, and flourish more in doctrine and manners, in peace, and power, and glory then ever it hath done since men first inhabited the earth. What *Aristotle* therefore relates of *Phidias* the famous Carver, I shall apply to Divine Providence, for as he being to make the Image of *Minerva*, did with such curious Art work his own face upon the statue, that whosoever should scrape out the face, must of necessity deform the whole Image: so the great Architect of Heaven and earth, hath in such a wonderfull manner engraven as it were his own glorious face, his power, his wisdom, his goodnesse, upon the whole fabrick of the world, and upon every part thereof, that this Divine face of God cannot be separated from any creature, without the creatures ruine and annihilation. I will conclude this point, and my first Proposition with *Dauids* Confession, *Psal. 40. v. 5. O Lord my God, thou hast made thy wonderfull works so many, that none can count in order thy thoughts towards us, I would declare and speak of them, but they are more then I am able to expresse.*

Mich 4 3.
Isa. 54. 11.
L. de mundo
c. 6.

Prop. 2. Foolish things in the judgement of the world are in great esteem with our wise God.

How much the Heathens of old did contemne the Jews for Circumcision, that seal of the Covenant in the flesh, Poets and profane Writers do sufficiently manifest. And although the Socinians of later times do not plainly deride Baptisme, the Sacrament of Christianity and new birth, yet they place it amongst unnecessary ceremonies, and account it rather a matter of form and custome, then of use and power. What wicked titles doth *Muncer* that great Anabaptist give to Matrimony the holy Ordinance of God, and, which is honourable in all, calling it *fornicium*, and *Sathana lupanar*, the stew, and whore-houle of the Devil, from whose opinion *Cister* the Jesuite doth not much dissent, professing, that a Clergie-man who keeps concubines, and commits sacrilege, offends lesse then he who is married to a wife: And do not many amongst us think coulsly of the blessed Eucharist, not discerning the Lords body, as the Apollie speaks,

Volk. l. 6. de
revo. reli c 14.
p 672 673.

Sleyd Com.
Bulling l. 1.

Enchyre 17.

1 Cor. 11 29.

AG. 14 3.

Phi. 2. 16.

Rom. 1. 6

Burtor. in Syn.

Jud. & *ireens*

Treatise of the

Iew. p. 349.

*Visa est mihi**indigna quam**Tulliana digni-**tati compara-**rem.*

Aug. Con. 13.

c. 5.

AG. 16. 24.

AG. 17 32.

2 Cor. 5. 18.

Rom. 10. 14.

2 Cor. 10 4.

Heb. 4. 12.

who profane those sacred mysteries with carnall thoughts, and unprepared hearts, and rather feed their bodies than their faith? The holy Scripture, which is the word of grace, the word of life, the power of God unto salvation, by the Jews is lesse valued than the Talmud, and in the esteem of Papiſts, is an imperfect leaden rule, a dead and dangerous letter, a nose of wax. That God should be incarnate, and suffer is madnesse in the judgement of *Festus*: A Virgin to bear a son, or a resurrection from the dead is abundant matter of laughing at *Athens*.

What better entertainment hath the preaching of the Gospel? which is the ministry of reconciliation, and the ordinary means of eternall happinesse, opening the ears, enlightning the eyes, softning the heart, and sanctifying the whole man. How is it accounted by too many, *Ludibrium & probrosum artificium*, as *Gerson* speaks, a vain work, a dishonourable profession? how do we loath this heavenly *Manna*? What a foolish unnecessarie businesse doe we make it, preferring our ease, our profit, our private reading before the bread of life, and the publick worship and service of the Almighty. Such is the condition of the flesh, and corrupt reason, and worldly wisdom that they cannot relish matters of greatest weight, of highest excellency, they cannot discern the doctrine of faith, the mysteries of salvation, some reasons may be these.

Reas. 1. *God seeth not as Man seeth.*

The Lord beholds the heart, he regardeth sinceritie and faithfulness, he loves a willing mind, a cordiall wish, when all things else are wanting: But men have base and baitard principles by which they judge, and by which they are led, they look upon the Garment and outward appearances, either blessing themselves in their policie with *Achitophel*, or in their power with *Nebuchadnezzar*, or in their full barns with the Rich-man in the Gospel, Soul take thy ease, thou hast goods laid up for many yeers, when alas, the whole world is nothing to the happines of the soul; and Gold can no more fill the spirit of man, than grace can fill his purse. *Elia* looked more like a King, then *David* in the eyes of *Sammel*, yet *David* was elected, and *Elia* refused. 1 Sam. 16. v. 6, 7. And that which is highly esteemed amongst men, is abomination.

1 Chro. 28. 9.

Ier. 17. 10.

1 Sam. 16. 7.

tion in the sight of God, *Luk* 16. 15. How doth the face and outward splendor of the Romish Church prevail with carnall minds? How many owe their Religion more to education, then to the Scriptures; and are rather born in good opinions, then chuse them? *Veritas & veritas* was never out of the mouth of the Manichees, when they spake those things which were most false, and their many and great books were full of the Name of Truth, when their hearts were emprie of the Nature Look upon those vast and Giant-like Volumes of *Baronius*, *Vasquez*, *Salvez*, and many others of that *Ignatian* Order; how are they composed with judgement, strengthened with reason, confirmed with antiquitie? what tongue do they not speak, what Art do they not know, what sanctitie do they not profess? And if you desire to understand what Politie they use to establish the Kingdom of darknesse, to endear their name and credit to the world, I refer y^e to three books, the one intituled, *Antica Jesuitarum* the other *Historia Jesuitarum*, the third *Historia Jesuitarum*. Proceed a little further, and take notice of those lesser, but no lesse pernicious works of *Socius Volkeius*, and some other petty primer tracts of their adherents: their ratioll discourses would invite and feast any man who is not nourished with Grace, and disciplin'd by Scripture, their smooth and insinuating language would deceive, if it were possible, the very Elect: So that if we should judge our cause and Religion by the face and eye of man, it Booke or Politie, or externall glory were the onely arguments of Truth, and characters of the Gospel, our state were desperate, and as the Apostle speaks in another case, we were of all men most miserable.

St. Chrysostome in his third *Hom.* on the 1. to the *Cor.* comparing *Paul* and *Plato* together, prefers the Heathen before the Apostle in point of reason, and in the knowledge of Nature; notwithstanding gives the victory to St. *Paul*, and layes the Philosopher in the dust. And I beleeve if we examine the whole Catalogue of Martyrs, and take an exact view of those good souls who did put on the whole armour of God, and have wrestled with the rulers of darknesse, and spirituall wickednesse, we shall finde the unlearned but religious tradesmen professing Christ, and entertaining death when the Scribe and disputer have re-

Ann 1. 3.
Conf. c. 6.

Hom. 3. in 1.
ad *Cor.*
λαμπροθυμ.

*Nostri (ut de
viris taceam)
pueri & muli-
ercula torto-
res suos, taciti
vincunt & ex-
promere illis
gemitum nec
ignis potest.
Laet. l. 5. c. 13.
Socrat. l. 1. ca.
5. hist. Eccl.
1 Cor. 1. 26.*

Rom. 8. 6, 7.

nounced their faith, and forsook their colours, we shall finde the wisdom of the wise destroy'd, and sillie women and children putting their hands into those flames which the Doctors refused. One illiterate laick at the Councell of Nice confounded and nonplust many Scholers. And how many of Christs Apostles were fisher-men, learned onely in goodnesse, and better read in sinceritie then books? what can be more plain then that of St. *Paul*, *Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called.* And St. *Chrysostome* will give us the reason, because the great and studied Scholer blessing himself for the most part in the proud swellings of his deep learning, stands upon his own strength and excellency, and will do nothing without a reason: when the illiterate Countreyman, the poore (snake abhors himself, is contemptible in his own eyes, and with all humility and fear casts himself down at the Almightyes feet. St. *Paul* goes further, and tels us, that the wisdom of the flesh is death, is enmitie against God, neither is or can be subject to the Law of God. *Rom. 8.* All which is to be understood of wisdom and knowledge so long as they continue carnall, carried away with pride, and self-sufficiencie; For we must know that many of Gods dearest children have been, and still are as able Schollers, as glorious lights, and as eminent in every outward excellency as any in the world; who ever more eloquent then *Isaiah*? more profound then St. *Paul*? more renowned for all learning then *Moses* and *Solomon*? wisdom and knowledge, are happy instruments of salvation when they are guided by truth, and steered by Religion, they are great vertues in themselves; and if there were no other world but this, I would account my study, my heaven, and my books everlasting life: But when the text tels me *non est* not many wise, when Philosophie teacheth *Corruptio optimi est pessima*, when experience sheweth no wickednesse to the wickednesse of a Scholer, I must conclude, that *Piety is the greatest Politie; and the best Christian, the wisest Man.*

Reas. 2. Foolish things are made wise by Gods effectuall calling.

When God calls any Man effectually, he puts his fear into his heart, as *Jeremy* speaks; And *Solomon* assures us, that *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*: when we delight in the Command-

mandments of God, and devote our selves to the obedience thereof, when we are eminent in good works, and abundant in service, and embrace Religion with any danger, with any difficulty; then are we wiser then our adversaries, our teachers, our elders, as *David* speaks, wiser then the great *Achitophels* the Pharisees of the world; who being puffed up with the pride of their strong brain, and blinded with an opinion of their profound knowledge, will deride Christ himself, when he tels them that it is impossible to serve God and *Mammon*. For wisdom is the fruit of Devotion. And because *David* was holier, therefore he was wiser then his Enemies: Piety raiseth the soul of man, and purgeth it from those lusts which do besot our knowledge; it inspires the understanding with an high and heavenly light, by which we discern the subtiltie of the Devil, the corruption of our own hearts, the mystery of salvation; it breaths into our Actions sincerity, and watchfulnesse, and the life of wisdom. Though we understand the depths, and secrets of State, excell in judgement, sharpnesse of wit, faithfulnesse of memorie, and in variety of experience and observations; though we be living libraries, and have not Religion, we are blinde and stupid, and fools in any true knowledge: the flower and spirit of all our wisdom is but learned follie, and beautifull simplicitie. For tell me, O thou mightie Man of knowledge, who doest trample upon the counsels of others with contempt, and art the Oracle of God in the esteem of Men; can thy Policie resist the Devil? or finde out the wiles and devises of the old Serpent, who is well read in all the Arts and advantages of the earth, and is as full of knowledge as of malice? Can thy worldly wisdom preserve thy life one moment longer then God hath decreed? can it conduct thee the way to Heaven? or preserve thy soul from Hell? that precious soul, which St. *Basil* calls *the delight of the Almighty*; and St. *August* *The miracle of miracles*; that divine, spirituall, eternall soul, I tremble to speak it, *our souls are eternall*: when we have continued as many yeers as there are drops in the Sea, we have not continued one moment in comparison of Eternitie; were all the world a Mountain of sand, and every thousand yeers one of those sands removed, that Mountain would have an end, but Eternitie would be no lesser; After all the ages which Men or Angels can

Psal. 119 98,
99, 100.

Luk 16. 13, 14

2 Sam. 16. 23.

Iob 4. 6.

number or conceive, Fecunditie doth but begin, it doth alwayes begin, and is nothing but beginning. And now let the eye of reason judge betwixt a childe of God, and a man of the world; betwixt the providence of Heaven, and the wiidom of the flesh: what learning is it, to know all the secrets of Nature, and to be a very fool in the mysteries of Grace? What Policie is it to have a cleare light into all the Kingdoms of the earth, and to be stark blinde in the kingdom of Heaven? what profit is it to gain the whole world, and to lose our eternall souls? All the admirable knowledge and vertues of the Heathen are but *glorious abominations* in the iudgement of St. *Augustine*; and *Nicodemus* one of the best of the Pharisees, a Ruler of the Jews, and a professed Doctor in the Law, is stupid and childeish in the principles of Christianity; if our Saviour talk to him of being born again, he presently thinks of entering into his Mothers wombe. *The natural Man*, the Man endowed with all the excellencies of which the soul is naturally capable, *perceiveth not the things of the Spirit of God*; hath neither wiidom to make a right choice of the best end, nor undertaking to finde out the true means; Nay he esteems them *foolishnesse*, and to change such the greatest blessing into a fearfull curse. St. *Paul* will give us the reason of all; *Because they are spiritually discern'd*, they require single eyes, and soft hearts, and humble thoughts; they require a sanctifying spirit. The wisdom of Heaven, proceeds onely from the God of Heaven, and therefore,

1. *Do not contemne thy weak brother.*

God can raise his thoughts, or direct his tollie to an happy end, he can make him an Instrumēt of glory, who is now a subject of weaknesse, and can strike a streight stroak with a crooked stick. Let us remember that we our selves in times past were unwite, disobedient, deceived, serving lusts, and divers pleasures, that we continue clay of the same lump, branches of the same root; and the same Grace which supports one, may raise another: *For* who made us to differ? or what have we that we have not received? Although the Jews be now a *by-word* amongst the Heathen and have lyen long under Captivitie; although they are broken off from the stock, yet God is able to graff them in again, and to let the day of his glory shine forth upon them.

Nay

Matt. 16. 16.

Splendia peccata

Ioh. 3. 4.

1 Cor. 2. 14.

Psal. 19. 6.
& 119. 130.

Ti. 3. 3.

1 Cor. 4.
Psal. 44. 13.

Rom. 11. 22.
Lev. 26. 43.

Nay, God will remember his Covenant with *Abraham* and *Jacob*, his calling is without change; no sin can frustrate his Election. Those who are Enemies to the Common-wealth of *Israel* and are darknesse it self, may be enlightned by the Sun of righteousness: God may have children amongst *Turks* and *Pagans*; the wilderness may nourish sheep, and the hard *Iron* afford soveraign spirits: The Thief upon the Crosse became a Saint; and persecuting *Saul* was changed into *Paul* an Apostle. Other mens imperfections therefore may be our instructions, they may be arguments of great devotion, they must not be objects of any derision: the least sin deserves contempt; but the greatest sinner, charitie: let us hate the vice, but help the man, pity him, pray for him, let us extend our breasts of compassion, wheresoever is hope of Conversion. But above all, let us not despise our zealous brother, who out of a pious apprehension of the joyes of heaven, and of the torments of hell, of the love of Christ, and wickednesse of sin, makes a conscience of the least transgression, startles at all appearance of evil, is strict and tender, and fearfull in all his conversation, who looks upon the world with contempt, and for the Gospel sake will kisse the rod, and welcome death. *Calvin* dedicates his Commentary on the 1 to the *Corin*: to one *Caracciolus* a Marquesse of Italy, of great honour and estate, blessed with a noble and chaste wife, and with many sweet children, and full of peace and earthly happinesse; notwithstanding parted with his Countrey, bid fare-well to his pleasant and rich possessions, forsook his wife, and children, and friends, and all for the love of Christ and liberty of his conscience; following the counsell of *St. Hieron*, to his beloved *Heliodor*, If thy little Grandchild hang about thy neck, if thy mother with her hair untied, and her garments rent, shew thee those breasts which gave thee suck, if thy father cast himself down upon the threshold to keep thee in; tread upon thy father, and with drie eyes flye unto thy Saviour. It is Religi in this case to be cruell, and the greatest pitie to be pitilesse. *Ignatius* the Martyr was of the same minde, I would to God (saith he) I might enjoy those beasts which are prepared to eat me up, I will make much of them, and use them with all kindnesse, that they may devour me presently: Let the fagot, the gallows, the furie of wilde beasts,

Luk. 23-43.
Act 9.

Calvin Ep.
ded. in 1. ad
Cor.

Epist. 1. ad
Heliod.

Ignatius An-
tiochen.

beasts, the rack, the tearing and unjoynting of all the body, let the torments of the devill come upon me, so that I may gain Christ Jesus: it is better to dye for Christ, then to be Emperour of the whole world. Call not then devotion weaknesse, or zeal folly, rank not them in the kalender of fools, who prefer salvation before the world; and by a bold assertion of the Truth, fight for Martyrdom. God is never more honoured then when the kingdom of heaven suffers such violence: The Church never shewed more wisdom than when her zeal flamed highest. It was an ancient Complaint of *Justin Martyr* in the behalf of the primitive Christians, that they were condemned and put to death, *ὡς στυγίον νόσος* upon an ill report, and *ὡς τὸ βροχίον* for the Name of Christian, and *ὡς τῆς ἐμμελείας* for the profession of goodnesse: And in this kingdom there was a time when vertue and pietie were accounted crimes, and the Name of *Puritan* a greater accusation then drunkennesse or whoredom: *Luther* that glorious light of the Gospel, was called the Trumpet of Rebellion. The Prophet *Eliab* the Troubler of *Israel*; and St. *Paul* was made the filth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things.

Take heed therefore of rash and ungodly censures in matter of Religion, which requires our prayers, and patience, and charitie, abhors reproaches: Thou mayest abuse a Court with the Name of *faction*; and under the calummie of Brownitt, condemne a Saint: *Salvation* ought to be the businesse of our whole life: We cannot be more studious to preserve our souls, then the devill is to destroy them; we cannot be too carefull about that work, in which our greatest care is not enough.

2. Do not undervalue Gods Ordinances.

Divine Institution addes a price, and holy regard to every work: The time, the place, the matter, the manner, every circumstance receives weight from Gods command; and he who is not caretull to observe the least, doth not obey God when he performs the greatest. It *Naaman* will be cleansed, he must wash seven times in the water of *Jordan*, six times washing will not remove the Leprosie: whosoever will be cured must enter, First into the Pool after the Angel hath troubled the water; he that comes after shall have no benefit; Gods order must be observed, his

Apol. 2. pro
Christ. p. 54,
55.

Tertul. adver.
Gentes c. 20.

Adamus in
vita.

1 King 18. 17.
1 Cor. 4. 13.

Tertul. Apol.
contra Gent.
c. 39.

Salv. 1. 3.
2 King. 5.

his number regarded : contempt in any circumstance ruins all the work ; It is no just excuse to prefer some before others, when all ought to be done ; It is not the duty of a Servant to choose his work, and rather to dispute his Masters will, then to obey it. Let the Ordinances of Heaven be never so mean, so poore in regard of their outward condition ; They are worthy of precious account, of honourable esteem, of carefull observance, in respect of their Author, and those sacred ends for which they were injoynd : Common bread becomes the food of life in the Sacrament of the Lords Supper; and water, a vulgar and corrupt element, seals in Baptisme the remission of sins. The very same words of Man, which passe as wind, and onely beat the air, coming with Gods authoritie and blessing, shall melt a heart of flint, shall prosper in the work for which they were sent, are sharper then any two edged sword, are lively and mightie in operation. If the liquor be cordiall, what matter if the vessel be earthen ? If the Tabernacle be all gold within, what though the covering be of badgers skin ? A Scholer will not judge a book by the bulk and out-side, but by the contents. A Souldier will not choose a Sword by the luster of the hilt, but by the goodnes of the blade. The Author legitimates the work, the will and end is *All* in every action. *Cassius* whip'd his Mason, because he sent him a fitter Mast for his service, but not the same he required : and *Manlius* beheaded his son, because, contrary to command, he gave battell to the Enemy, and obtained the victory. And will God endure disobedience at the hands of sinfull men ? Is he lesse jealous of his honour then the creature ? shall he command, and threaten, and beseech ? Shall he bring salvation to our doors, to our bosomes, and shall we despise it ? Take heed, curses attend contempt, Famine follows abuse of fulnesse ; and unthankfulnesse in *Peace and knowledge*, brings war and ignorance. Our Saviour onely called *John* and *James*, and they without tarrying left their ship and their Father, and followed him : Parents, and Fortunes, and Lives give place to Gods command, we must disprove nothing which he approves, nor like any thing which he dislikes. For we are not our own, and therefore we must not set up our own wills, nor judge by our own reason, nor work for our own ends : but we must sacrifice our selves to

1 Cor. 11.
Aq. 2.

Isa. 55. 11.
Heb 4. 12.

A Gell. 1. 1.
c. 13.
Florus 1. 1. c.
14.

Deut. 38.

Matth. 4. 22.

Gods Providence.

God, our wils to his will, our reason to his knowledge, our whole endeavours to his glory. It is enough for us that he would have it so: *His will is wisdom, and justice, and power, and reason, and all things.*

Prop. 3. *God can effect glorious designs by weak and improbable means.*

Exod. 8.

V. 26.

Ioc. 2.

Iunius in locum.

Gen. 50. 20.

2 Kin. 2. 29.

What cannot the God of Heaven compass to set forth his own glory, and to advance his servants good? *Flies*, and *Frogs*, and *Lice*, the very corruption and dung of the earth, are too strong for *Pharaoh* a potent Prince: these vile and loathsome creatures shal conquer a Nation of armed Men. When all *Egypt* and any ground upon which an *Egyptian* breath'd did swarm with *Flies*, the Land of *Goshen*, a little spot of earth, and in the midst of the Countrey, was not molested with any: Not with *Flies* which of all creatures are most passeable, and least to be resisted: Walls and Rivers, and Armies cannot oppose their motion, deny them entrance: and yet these active irrational creatures did not touch upon *Goshen* when they were round about it, they did as it were know the people of God, and distinguish betwixt his Friends and Enemies. Read the 2. *Cap.* of *Joel*, how a great & mightie people were prepared for battell, before whom the Land was as a garden of *Eden*, and behind whom a desolate wilderness. v. 3. They shall come as the noise of a flame of fire, and devour men like stubble; v. 5. they shall march like strong men, and go forward in their way without resistance; v. 7. they shall fall upon the sword and not be wounded. v. 8. The earth shall tremble before them, and the Heavens shake. v. 10. And yet this powerfull terrible Army, in the 25. v. consists onely of *Grasshoppers*, and *Caterpillars*, vile despised wormes, which are strong to execute the word of God. v. 11. and are invincible Soldiers when the Lord of hosts is Generall. What more contrary to good than evil? or what more opposeth happiness than sin? Yet the evil of *Joseph's* brethren, God disposed to good; and the greatest sin that ever was, the crucifying the Lord of life, by the Divine Counsell produced the greatest blessing. Nay, the bitter waters shall be made sweet by salt, and the sacrifice shall burn when water is powred upon it: our very afflictions as over-mastered and

and rul'd by God have this injunction upon them to further our salvation: Our wounds are remedies, and those who contradict the precepts of the Almighty, obey his Providence. Reasons may be these. 1 King. 18.
34, 35.

1. *No means are Helps to God.*

The Lord of hosts can conquer without an Army (*Zach. 4. 6.* Neither by power nor might, but by his Spirit he can subdue every Mountain of opposition) and bring about whatsoever he hath determined. Indeed in the ordinarie course of Providence, second causes do concur, and in their sphear derive to every effect a proper vertue: Yet here also the God of Providence hath the governing power; he is the Author of all the good which is produced, and may be said to work himself though with other means: For all the world of Creatures are but Instruments at the most, such as contribute no assistance to the Almighty God; they depend upon him for their *Being*, they work by his continuall influence, and receive their ends from his eternall Order. The same reasons which moved God to make the Creatures, move him still to use them; not necessitie, or want of power, but love and goodnesse. Did he cast out devils with his finger, *Luk. 1.* and can he not beat down men with his hand? Did he make the world when there was no help, and can he not rule the world without any help? Is his arm shortned who is omnipotent? or his Providence decayd who is wisdom it self? The shadow of *Peter* shall heal multitudes of all diseases, *Act. 5.* And the letter *Thau* upon the foreheads of his people shall preserve them; *Ezek. 9. 4.* Act. 5. 15.
Ezek 9. 4.

9. God is not like the children of Men, who can do nothing without their tools; he can work above means, and he can work against means: sometimes he disablen the greatest means, and sometimes he useth no means at all.

2. *God can help the means.*

He that can work without means, can improve and advance the weakest means, can raise and quicken every temper, and dispose little occasions to great purposes. *Luther* an obscure Fryar, did shake the whole kingdom of Hell and Antichrist, by whom God gave Truth a resurrection, and a conquest over herefile.

Hock. Ecc.
fol 15. l. c 42.

See the story,
The danger is
past as soon as
the letter is
burnt.

Isa 38.

2 Kin 30 7..

*Ficus suapte
natura possunt
pus evocare &
educere.*

Cell. l. 5. c 12.

Ecd. 10. 10.

Iosep. Anti. l.

15. c 14.

Rev. 12. 16.

So some good

Divines inter-

pret.

2 King. 5.

John 9.

Iudg. 7.

whole world against *Ashrafus*, and *Ashrafus* against it; half a hundred of yeers spent in doubtfull triall, which of the two in the end would prevail the side which had all, or that part which had no Friend but *God* and *Death*. And to come a litle nearer home, and it would be strange ingratitude in this place, to forget that generall deliverance which this whole Land obtain'd by the *doubtfull language of a few carelesse syllables*: And which is more to be admired, when the vault was ready, the powder laid, the train made, the match prepared, the Executioners of all bloody in resolution, and in the rage of their Fury. Then the hand of God made a *scrip of Paper* to frustrate all the work, and to vanquish *Rome* and hell it self: we all know that *Ezekias* being sick unto death, was cured with a bunch of *Figs*, which having a peculiar nature to drie *Ulcers*, in time would have matured the *Boyl*; but the sudden cure was the hand of God; if the *Iron* be blunt, God puts more strength unto it: If our gracious Creator will favour the building of the Temple, no rain shall fall for ten yeers space, in the day-time to hinder the workmen. The woman in the *Revel.* the Spouse of Christ shall be holpen by the *Earth*, the dullest of Elements, the basest of the people. *Naaman* shall be healed by the common waters of *Jordan*, the *blinde-man* cured by clay and spittle; Physick fitter in common reason to have destroy'd the Eyes, than to have restored the sight: When God speaks terror, 300. Men shall vanquish a mighty host, and empty pitchers shall affright an Army as much as roaring Cannons: Nay a blast, a rumor, a *Fancy*, shall overthrow the greatest power on earth; The *Moabites* had a fancy that they saw the blood of their Enemies, when they saw nothing but the Sun shining in the water: And yet this fancy was their overthrow, 2 King. 3. 22. So easie it is for God to raise strength out of weaknes, to pull down the pride of flesh and blood, and to make a shadow, a trifle the Instrument of great Deliverance. And therefore,

1. Trust not in Means.

The way to have any thing taken from us, and not blest, is to trust in it, and depend too much upon it: The Prophet *Jerem.* is positive herein, cursed be the Man who trusts in Man, and who maketh flesh his arm. The reason followeth, and which draweth his

Ier. 27. 5.

his heart from God : For when we make flesh our arm, account it our support and strength, and relye upon it for deliverance, our hearts are withdrawn, and departed from the living God; we *Deifie* the creature, and as much as in us lyes, we *u. God* th: Creator. The Lord himself in effect, speaks as much in his discourse with *Gedeon*, *Judg.* 7. The people which are with thee are too many for me to give the *Midianites* into their hands, lest *Israel* make their vaunt against me, and say my hand hath saved me. *Self-sufficiency* and *Creature-confidence* is of a vaunting and rebellious Spirit. It sets up it self, and De-thrones the Almighty. *Isa.* 47. 10. *Wo to them, saith Isaiah, Chap. 31. ver. 1. that go down into Egypt for help, and trust in chariots because they are many, and in horses because they are strong: And if you would know what this wo is, the Prophet will acquaint you in the 3. v. When the Lord shall stretch out his hand, the helper shall fall; and he that is holpen shall fall, and they shall all together fail.* Curies and woes follow them which rest in, and lean to earthly things, and the fruit of carnall confidence is destruction. Out of God there is nothing but the Creature, which is changeable, emptie, and insufficient, which borrows all the worth it hath, and by *very trusting in it*, proves uncomfortable. How many Parents lose their children, by setting their hearts too much upon them? who miscarry oftner than Men of the greatest parrs? Let us not therefore cry up the hands of *Zerubabel*, nor the *greatnesse of an Army*, nor the *wisdom of a Parliament*, but let us exalt the power of the Almighty, adore his Providence, trust in his goodnesse; let every Christian endeavour to joyn his soul close unto God, and as it were to square it for him, to bring his trust onely to the God of trust, and to set him in his own place, the highest in the heart. For the conjunction of the soul with God is the life thereof; and while we be careful to preserve that union, the gates of Hell cannot prevail against us, we stand impregnable. But if the Diuell come once betwixt God and our souls, and it is his greatest study so to do; If the love of the creature, and confidence therein make the least separation, and unloose our hearts from their chiefeit good, then our rock and sure footing is gone: we lye open to that roaring Lion, and to those waters of iniquity which will quickly sink us in perdition: Despair, Idolatry, Atheisme, and the whole body of sin have free

Gods Providence.

free passage into our souls : We cannot step from God, but *Satan* steps to us ; Every degree of departing from God is distrust and unbelief, and what will not an unbelieving heart commit ?

2. Serve Gods Providence in the use of means.

So far as God affords us helps and means, we must not be wanting in our duty to actuate their power, and to imploy them to the best advantage ; we must go along with Providence, and serve occasion and opportunities, and be exactly carefull of all means, although we must not trust in any. God promised *Josuah*, not to leave him, nor forsake him ; yet he bids him be strong, and of a good courage : the *Israelites* must fight it out, when God had given the Enemy into their hands. Indeed sometimes he will have us onely spectators of his actions, he will tell *Jehosaphat* and the people of *Judah*, they shall not need to fight in the battell ; stand still, move not, and behold the salvation of the Lord towards you : when he is pleased to shew a strange deliverance, and to get honour in the confusion of his Enemies, as he did on *Pharaoh* in the red Sea ; then there shall be no concurrence of second causes, he will fight himself, and do his own work with his own hands. But most commonly he requires the service of the Creatures, which he doth not want, and sets down a course of means which he will not alter ; and then it concerns us to answer Providence with industry, to put forth our strength, and to use such means as God vouchsafes. If we have the honour to be Gods Instruments, we must do the office of Instruments, and be active : we must cast our care on God for the issue, but we must sweat our selves in the prosecution. Hell it self shall never prevail against the flock of Christ, yet they must *strive* to enter in at the narrow gate, they must *work* out their own salvation with fear & trembling. Election to the end, includes the means, and whosoever will be happy in another world, must first be good in this. Presumption is as dangerous as distrust ; and he may justly lose the fruit of a blessed end, who neglects the use of lawfull means.

3. Consider in God in the want of means.

It was a pious speech of *Luther* in an Epistle to *Melancton*, God is able to preserve his own cause from falling, or to raise it when it is fallen :
God

Iosu. 1.

2 Chro. 20. 17

Exod. 14.

Isa. 13. 24.
Phil. 2. 12.

God is never more neer his people, than when deliverance seems furthest off; they can be in no condition where he is at a stand, and cannot help them. This war which we thinke will devour us all, may be an Instrument of preservation, as the whale which swallowed up *Jonas*, was a means to bring him to the shore. The depths of Mercy are beyond the depths of miserie, and God hath his own wayes of helping his children, when all things else deny them help. The violence of the winde turn'd back the Darts of *Eugenius* his Army into their own faces for the victory of *Theodosius*. A number of little fishes will come to feed the *Rockellers* in a hard siege. *Moab* and *Ammon*, the Enemies of *Judah* shall destroy one another. So mighty is God in power, and excellent in working. Say that our sins are many and our transgressions great, yet Gods mercies are more, & his glory will be greater in pardoning. No faults, can damme up the endles goodnesse of the Almighty, we cannot offend so much as he can pardon. Say that our enemies are many, and mighty, and cruell, yet *Abah* with a few yong Men, vanquished *Benhadad's* great Army, and 32 Kings with him. The Divell is stronger by Man's wickednesse, then by his one power. Say what we can, & say the worst we can, that *England* is fore wounded, and poore *Ireland* is giving up the Ghost: Yet remember that Repentance preserv'd *Ninive* which in 40 dayes was to be destroy'd, that Faith deliver'd *Daniel* out of the Lions mouth. That he, who will raise our bodies, can mend our worst condition. Was *Abraham* deceived, who trusted in God for a Sonne against the course of Nature? Or *David*, who being compassed about with the waters of affliction, hoped for better times? Or the 3 Children who beleev'd that God would deliver them out of the fiery furnace? O Lord my God, in thee have I put my trust. save me from all that persecute me, and deliver me. And deliver us all he will, if we all pray unto him, for faithfull praier is Omnipotent: And pray unto him we shall, if we all trust in him, for trust is the root & life of successefull prayer: Let us all therefore Pray, and Trust, and Trust and Pray, that our heavenly father would work a good understanding betwixt King *Charles* and his great Counsell, that he would look with the eye of compassion upon dying *Ireland*, that his mercifull hand would make up the breaches of distressed *England*, that his goodnesse would take away

Ion. 1.17.

2 Chron. 10.
22.
Isa. 18. 19.

1 King. 10.

Ion 3.
Dan. 6.

Dan. 3. 17.
Psal. 7. 1.

Gods Providence.

away the cause of all calamities, *our many, and great, and crying sins.* And after our prayers let us trust again, that seeing it is all one with the Lord, *to save with many or with few, to help with means or without means:* He will in due time produce a sweet correspondence betwixt the King and people; he will deliver bleeding Ireland out of the hands of bloody Rebels. He will restore distressed England to a happy condition; he will pardon our iniquities, and remember them no more. *Let us pray therefore, and trust continually, and let us never cease to trust and pray.*

FINIS.

Die Mercurii 28 Decemb. 1642.

I*T is this day Ordered by the House of Commons, that Master Corbett shall have thanks returned him from this House for the great pains he took in the Sermon he preached this day at St. Margarets in the City of Westminster, at the intreaty of this House. And that he be desired to print his Sermon: And it is Ordered that no man shall presume to print it but he, whom the said Mr. Corbett shall authorize under his hand-writing. And it is further Ordered that Sir John Corbet, a Member of this House, shall return the thanks to Master Corbett.*

H. Elsyng Cler. Parl. D. Comm.

I*Appoint Rob. Bostock Stationer to print this Sermon.*
E D. CORBET.

